

HEALTH, PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND RECREATION IN CANADA:

A HISTORY OF PROFESSIONAL PREPARATION

A Report of a Type C Project

by

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This project is recommended for approval by the Student's Project Committee whose individual certificates of approval are on file in the Advanced School.

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with the arrival of Miss Coventry from the Peterborough, Ontario, Normal School in 1912, to assume the position of Director of Athletics for Women. This outline prescribed theory lectures for one hour a week to extend over the entire undergraduate period of four years. Lectures included anatomy, hygiene, the physiology and psychology of exercise, history of physical education and, in the fourth year, pedagogy and social service. Practical exercises were required for three periods each week and included, in addition to the previous curriculum, rings, fencing, aesthetic gymnastics, folk dances, games and swimming.⁵⁶

Men showed little interest in their course which remained unchanged until both courses were revised for the session 1918-1919.⁵⁷ Admission requirements included those for regular undergraduate courses and no fees were charged for the additional physical education subjects studied. Most departments of education accepted these diplomas in lieu of teachers' certificates, but the numbers graduating and entering the field were few.

The Margaret Eaton School of Literature and Expression

A third diploma course in physical education came

56

University of Toronto, Calendar for the Session 1912-1913, Toronto, University of Toronto, 1912, p. 47.

57

_____, Calendar for the Session 1918-1919, Toronto, University of Toronto, 1918, p. 112.

about by indirect means as well, through an expansion of a course given in dramatic art by the School of Expression at Victoria College, an affiliate of the University of Toronto.

Dorothy Jackson reports the opening of the school in 1900 by Emma Scott Raff, a teacher at Victoria College. The curriculum directed attention to "the spoken word ... the health and grace of the body, the imagination and the artistic aptitudes of all students."⁵⁸ Classes were arranged for students who were enrolled in regular courses at Victoria College; their purpose, it would appear, was to develop the social graces of the young ladies of the times. The curriculum included physical education as a means of assisting the students to move gracefully on the stage and of helping them to observe the niceties of movement; possibly fashioned after the Delsarte use of gestures and poses thought helpful to effective dramatics, and introduced earlier into the "fashionable" schools of New York City.⁵⁹

By 1905 the School of Expression had outgrown the studio at Bloor and Yonge Streets.⁶⁰ Through the

58

Dorothy N.R. Jackson, A Brief History of Three Schools, Toronto, [n.p.], 1953, p. 7.

59

Bennett A. Rice and John L. Hutchinson, A Brief History of Physical Education, New York, 3rd ed., A.S. Barnes & Co., 1952, p. 183.

60

Jackson, op. cit., p. 8.

friendship of Mrs. Timothy Eaton, who was keenly interested in dramatics, and also interested in the work of Mrs. Scott Raff, land, building and furniture was furnished by Mr. Eaton as a gift from his wife.⁶¹ This new school, named The Margaret Eaton School of Literature and Expression, received its charter in 1906. It had, as its objectives, the establishment of highest standards in the training of teachers in literature, dramatic art and physical education, and the provision of special courses in personal culture.⁶²

The regular course outline provided one year of instruction for a variety of subjects under the heading of literature and expression, and also for dancing and gymnastics, which were used as avenues of expression. Miss Jackson records that leadership in this connection was provided first by Miss Helen Ward Armington, a graduate of the Sargent School, Boston, and then by Miss Constance Wreyford from the Hemenway Gymnasium, Harvard University.⁶³ Miss Mary Hamilton, a native Ontarian who had received training in London and New York schools of dance, replaced Miss Wreyford in 1910.⁶⁴

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Personal records collected by Miss Mary G. Hamilton.

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Jackson, op. cit., p.9

⁶³

Ibid., p.10

⁶⁴

Personal interview by the author with Miss Mary Hamilton, January 6, 1955.

Mrs. Scott Raff was extremely interested in physical education and "emphasized that in a system of education for expression ... beginnings should be made with the education of the body rather than the mind, for life is first physical and then mental."⁶⁵ Although Miss Hamilton reports there was only a smattering of physical education at first,⁶⁶ the leadership of these two women promoted interest in this field.

As the work developed, students found themselves filling demands for teachers of physical education. Miss Hamilton records that the physical education was inadequate and that as these students did not want all that was outlined in the dramatic arts course, an inevitable split resulted in 1916. A department of physical education was organized, and a two year course set up.⁶⁷

The importance of physical education, the growing strength of the playground movement, and the need for teachers and leaders is indicated in the calendar for the 1915-1916 session:

⁶⁵ Jackson, op. cit., p.10.

⁶⁶ Hamilton, op. cit.

⁶⁷ Ibid

A recognition of physical education as an essential in the curriculum of every school and college has created a demand for thoroughly qualified teachers. Through the rapidly increasing interest in the establishment of playgrounds and recreation centres throughout the country, the demand for trained instructors and workers exceeds the supply. The aim of this department is to provide young women with a thorough training which will enable them to take advantage of these opportunities for service as teachers and supervisors of physical education in all its phases.⁶⁸

The course, which required junior matriculation for entrance, still included Browning, Shakespeare and studio reading. In physical education, staff members gave lectures in anatomy, physiology, hygiene, kinesiology and the theory of physical education. Practical work included rhythmic exercises, apparatus, games, athletics and swimming. All forms of dancing, including instruction in folk dances, received emphasis.⁶⁹ The visit of Cecil Sharpe to the School heightened interest particularly in English country dancing. Poise and posture continued to receive attention. A former student recalls instructions as to the best method of "getting into a taxi" or "picking up things gracefully."⁷⁰

The School continued to flourish, and the activities

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Margaret Eaton School of Literature and Expression, Calendar, 1915-1916, p.11.

69

Hamilton, op. cit.

70

Personal interview by the author with Miss Mildred Wickson, January 5, 1955.

activities of the department of physical education made additional space necessary. This problem was solved in January, 1918, when Mr. Timothy Eaton gave the Margaret Eaton School the use of a recreation centre at 415 Yonge Street in Toronto.⁷¹ This former Y.M.C.A. building suited the purpose admirably, and made possible the expansion of the instructional program in the post-war years.

LORD STRATHCONA'S TRUST

In addition to the contributions of early diploma courses in physical education, the gift of Lord Strathcona, which became known as the Strathcona Trust, has been of lasting importance. The acceptance of this gift in 1909, the authorization of its constitution drawn up by Sir Frederick Borden, Minister of Militia, and the acceptance of its terms by the provinces, generally resulted in a good deal of controversy, and in some cases, it is claimed, has inhibited development in this field. Some knowledge of the man who permitted the Trust to bear his name may be helpful to understand this dilemma.

Lord Strathcona

Donald Smith, who was born of poor Scottish

71

Hamilton, op. cit.

The heavy load of a regular University course and requirements in physical education coupled with the long period of preparation discouraged students; other teacher education institutions made less stringent requirements. The course continued, however, providing an average of five graduates each year. The Minister of Education for the Province of Ontario reported twenty-four students registered in the course in 1938 and advised that: "The women graduates who have been granted diplomas in physical education ... continue to be appointed physical directors or instructors in Ontario schools."²⁸

The Margaret Eaton School The Margaret Eaton School of Literature and Expression, which had received new quarters early in 1918, was well prepared for expansion during the post-war period. It enlarged its staff, and added a variety of games and athletics to the two year diploma course in physical education²⁹ which, through the efforts and persistence of Miss Hamilton, became firmly established in the school.

In the fall of 1924, the purchase of Camp Tanamakoon in Algonquin Park by Miss Hamilton, made further extension of the course possible. The following September,

28

Province of Ontario, "Report of the Minister of Education," Sessional Papers. Vol. LXXI. Part XII, Toronto, King's Printer, 1939, p.122.

29

Personal interview by the author with Mary C. Hamilton, January 5, 1955.

students attended the camp for a three week workshop in sports and camping activities. According to Miss Hamilton, who comprehended the educational potentialities of camping,³⁰ "the venture was well worthwhile."

Other notable changes occurred in 1924. The widening of Bay Street which required the removal of part of the school building precipitated the resignation of Mrs. Scott Raff Nasmith, and resulted in the closing of the Margaret Eaton School of Literature and Expression in the spring of 1925.³¹ The Board of Directors organized a new school, with headquarters in the Extension Building of 415 Yonge Street, and named it the Margaret Eaton School.³²

The progress of the old school continued in the new. Thirty-nine first year and eleven second year students enrolled for the 1925 session, being admitted on the basis of matriculation and suitability for the work. The course, which aimed to make its graduates competent to organize and take charge of every branch of physical training for girls, included a variety of subjects in theory and practice. In addition to history and methods of

³⁰ Hamilton, op. cit.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Jackson, op. cit., p. 21.

physical education, the curriculum prescribed anatomy, physical education, first aid, remedial gymnastics and hygiene," ... to enable teachers to give instruction in Public Schools regarding health habits.³³ Practical subjects included gymnastics, practice teaching, folk dancing, fencing, swimming, archery, track and field, hockey, basketball, baseball, tennis and camp activities.³⁴

Such a variety of subjects reflected changes towards a broad and active curriculum of physical education in keeping with the changing times and, to some extent, the skills and interests of the professional staff. Graduates of the Sargent School, Boston, the Chicago Normal School of Physical Education, the Chelsea College of Physical Education and Northwestern University served as members of the faculty.

Miss Hamilton retired as director in 1933 in order to devote her energies to Camp Tanamakoon. Miss Florence Somers, graduate of New York University and former Associate Director of the Sargent School,³⁵ succeeded her in this capacity. Her able leadership stimulated a further development of courses and gained privileges through

33

The Margaret Eaton School, Department of Physical Education, Calendar for 1926-1927, Toronto, The School, 1926, p.7.

34

Ibid., p. 5.

35

Jackson, op. cit., p. 25.

cooperation with the University of Toronto to give the student " ... a thorough educational background for her life as a teacher in the field of physical and health education."³⁶

It will be noted later in the chapter that cooperation with the University of Toronto eventually resulted in a merger of courses and in the establishment of the School of Health and Physical Education -- but not before the Margaret Eaton School had contributed more than 250 graduates to the profession.

The McGill School of Physical Education The McGill School of Physical Education, after seven years of pioneer leadership in teacher preparation in health, physical education and recreation, reorganized as a part of McGill University. Plans for the extension and improvement of the course were realized with the authorization of a two year diploma course in 1919.³⁷

Admission standards continued to improve. In addition to matriculation requirements and age specifications, the School required prospective students to have other personal and professional skills. The Calendar notes:

36

The Margaret Eaton School, Calendar for 1940-1941, Toronto, The School, 1940, p. 9.

37

McGill School of Physical Education, "Announcement of the Inauguration of the Two Year Course."



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